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The civilizational role of Islam in the Indian subcontinent: The Delhi sultanate

Arshad Islam*

Abstract: Muslim presence was manifest in the coastal regions of Southern India from the earliest days of Islam, as evidenced by the establishment of Arab trading settlements, with minor political impact prior to the conquests in Northern India from the beginning of the 8th century, which solidified the influence of Islam leading to tangible political and socio-cultural impacts in the region. The history of India furnishes an amazing picture of the syntheses of many divergent cultural trends which were gradually transformed by a process of mutual adjustment and assimilation. Islam played a significant role in this by contributing to India's multi-cultural and multi-religious ethos, embedding the subcontinent in the Arab-Islamic maritime civilization, stretching from southern Africa to China, particularly in connecting Africa as well as the great Turkic empires of Central Asia. It offers a pertinent example of the interaction of human minds and the effects of cultural and civilizational contacts on indigenous customs, religion, literature and arts. This paper examines the impact of Islam in the Indian Peninsula from three different angles: its political predominance, its intellectual and cultural impact, and finally, its influence on art and architecture. Based mainly on Arabic and Persian sources, the article focuses on the intellectual legacy, achievements and the role that the Indian Muslims played in the Indian subcontinent during the Delhi Sultanate, the first major Islamic political authority to govern large parts of South Asia.

Keywords: Art and architecture, Civilizational impact of Islam, Delhi sultanate, India, Muslims.

Abstrak: Kewujudan orang Islam bertapak di kawasan-kawasan pantai Selatan India sejak bermulanya Islam di sana. Hal ini terbukti melalui penubuhan

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asal penempatan pedagang-pedagang Arab dengan kesan kecil politik sebelum penaklukan India Utara yang bermula pada Abad Ke-8. Hal ini dapat penyatupadukan pengaruh Islam terhadap politik beserta kesan sosio-budaya di wilayah tersebut. Sejarah India memberikan gambaran yang menakjubkan tentang penyatuan aliran budaya yang berbeza yang mana budaya tersebut, berubah sedikit demi sedikit melalui proses penyesuaian bersama dan melalui asimilasi. Islam memainkan peranan yang signifikan dengan menyumbang kepada keberbagaian budaya India serta etika-etika pelbagai agama. Hal ini termaktub dalam ketamadunan sub benua Arab Islam Maritim yang menjangkau dari Afrika Selatan hingga ke Negeri Cina, terutamanya dengan menyambungkan Afrika, termasuk empayar-empayar Turki di Asia Tengah. Ia memberikan satu contoh yang penting dalam interaksi minda manusia melalui kesan-lesan budaya dan ketamadunan hubungan antara adat resam, agama, kesusasteraan dan kesenian. Kertas kerja ini menguji kesan Islam di Semenanjung India daripada tiga sudut yang berbeza: kekuasaan politiknya, kesan intelek dan budayanya, dan akhir sekali dari segi pengaruh kesenian dan senibinanya. Berdasarkan sumber-sumber utama dari Arab dan Parsi, artikel ini memfokuskan terhadap legasi intelek, pencapaiannya, dan peranan yang dimainkan oleh orang Islam dalam sub-benua India semasa pemerintahan Kesultanan Delhi, kuasa politik Islam yang utama dalam pemerintahan sebahagian besar Asia Selatan.

Kata Kunci: Kesenian dan senibina, Kesan ketamadunan Islam, Kesultanan Delhi, India, Orang Islam.

Introduction

Sind has always been a major route for communication and trade between India and the Silk Route; also serving as the gateway of Islamic and Turkic political and immigrant incursion into India (Nadvi, 1932, pp. 13-14; Andre Wink, 1990, p. 513). Muhammad ibn Qasim al-Thaqfi (d.716) was the first to facilitate dialogue between Islam and India, leading to many local conversions as recorded by Al-Baladhuri (d. 892) and Buzurg ibn Shahriyar (d. 955) (Al-Baladhuri, 1932, p.446; al-Ramhurmuzi, 1883-86, p.3). The strategic and commercial importance of Sind was immense – economy- wise it produced large quantities of grains and other crops as well as livestock from mountainous regions (Ansar Zahid, 1980, p.196; Arshad Islam, 2001, p. 194).

The present study does not seek to recount the historical events of various conquests and invasions of the Indian north, which are extensively documented in the historical literature (e.g. the *Influence*

of *Islam on Indian Culture* by Tara Chand, and *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent* by Annemarie Schimmel), nor does it aim to discuss the antiquity of the Muslim presence in India, which is also well known from the legends of Raja Bhoja of Ujjain and the Arab Muslim settlers in coastal ports. Historically, the advent of Islam to the Indian Subcontinent began with the conquest of Sind in 711-12 (Chand, 2011, p. 32; Schimmel, 1980, pp. 3-4). The Sind and later the Delhi Sultanate formed the springboard of Islam's spread southward, which is the main concern of this discussion related to the civilizational role of Islam.

'Civilization' has been understood as urbanization, labour differentiation, concentration of surplus production, presence of class structure and the state-level organization, and generally associated with monumental and cultural accoutrements (Violatti, 2014). In this paper, we delimit the civilizational role of Islam to its impact on the social structure, organization and culture of native Indian societies, comprising a majority of Buddhist and Hindu populations within the geographical limits of the Delhi Sultanate. Islam's civilizational impact may be broadly divided into two interrelated categories: the early period associated with the Arab-Islamic, Umayyad and Abbasid powers in West Asia; and the later period consisting of the Delhi Sultanate, characterized mainly by Turkish and Afghan rulers from Central Asia and Afghanistan.

This paper postulates that the increasing autonomy and independence of the rulers from the early central authority of the Arab caliphates led to the emergence of a local civilizational dynamic, distinct from the *initial* civilizational influence of the Muslim conquest of Sind. For example, local Muslim rulers under the influence of the central authority did not seem to impose new religio-social patterns or try to change the social structure of Sind, or attempt mass conversions (Al-Biruni, 1964, p.11; Schimmel, 1980, p. 4). Al-Baladhuri quoted Muhammad ibn al-Qasim as saying: "The temples shall be unto us like the churches of the Christians, the synagogues of the Jews, and the fire temples of the Magians" (al-Baladhuri, 1964, p. 538). In other words, Muhammad ibn al-Qasim considered Buddhists and Hindus to be equal to *ahl-al-Kitab* (People of the Book), protected minorities who paid *jizya* (protection tax) in exchange for exemption from military service and given a large measure of religious freedom, as well as general freedom to conduct their business and regulate their intra-religious legal affairs. The

elevation of Hindus to the status of *Dhimmis* on par with *ahl-al-Kitab* was a remarkable and delineates the basic nature of Islamic governance in India, distinct from the treatment of the idolaters of the Arabian Peninsula.

The status of *ahl-al-Kitab* was originally given to the Christians and Jews. When the neighbouring regions populated by Zoroastrians and other communities were conquered by the Muslims, these communities were given the status of *Mushabih ahl-al-Kitab* (those resembling the people of the Book) and thereby they were accorded the status of the protected people (Qazi Abu Yusuf, 1352 A.H., p.128; Abu Ubaid Qasim, 1969, pp. 44-45). There is no difference in their respective positions except that while the Muslims are allowed to marry women of *ahl-al-Kitab* and eat the meat slaughtered according to their religious rites, this is not permitted in the case of *Mushabih Ahl-al-Kitab*. When Muhammad bin Qasim conquered Sind in the beginning of the eight century, the same status was given to the communities inhabiting the region (al-Kufi, 1983, pp. 208-209). Therefore their legal position in India during the medieval period was that of the protected people. Succeeding generations of Muslim scholars and rulers continued to accept this position and discordant voices have been very rare and almost negligible.

As the Abbasid power and authority waned and the Turkic world assumed a more vigorous role in Islamic affairs, Indian rulers continued to claim legitimacy from the institution of the caliphate, while exercising increasing autonomy. As a result, the pattern of tolerance of the early religio-social impact gradually changed and made way for the forceful imposition of political domination by the early Turkic conquerors seeking to legitimize their rule by appealing to Islamic commitment (al-Biruni, 1964, p. 116; *Hudud al-Alam*, 1970, p. 89; Aziz Ahmad, 1964, p.100).

Features of Islam's civilizational impact

The early period: The Umayyad and Abbasid incursions

The initial advance of the Muslims towards the Sind region was related to the conquest of Iran and the flight of its armies to the east as early as 636, but the Indian frontier remained tentative until consolidated by Caliph Muawiyah (r. 661-680) (al-Baladhuri, 1964, p. 420; al-Kufi,

1983, pp. 52-55), and Sind's systematic conquest took place only in 712 under al-Walid ibn 'Abd al-Malik (r.705-715). Al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf (d.714), the Umayyad viceroy, invested the command of the army in Sind to Muhammad ibn Qasim, who completed the task of subjugating the region by the end of 712, whereupon Sind became an Umayyad province (Al-Tabari, 1964, pp.1170-75; al-Kufi, 1983, pp. 180-85).

Muhammad ibn al-Qasim and his immediate successors maintained the social structure of Sind and adopted Sindhi languages as well as Arabic in their personal communication, and also adopted local clothing and cuisine (Al-Baladhuri, 1964, p. 446; al-Kufi, 1983, p. 151). Trade and commerce was particularly promoted in the newly built Arab cities of Mansura and Mahfuza, and also in the old city of Multan, and this interchange was accompanied by linguistic and cultural interactions that resulted in the translation of the Qur'an into the local language during the 9th century. This was conducive to the peaceful conversion of some local rulers (Al-Ramhurmuzi, 1883-1886, p. 3), facilitated by the openness of the Muslim administration to beneficial aspects of the indigenous culture and magnanimity to vanquished powers (Al-Baladhuri, 1964, p. 429), but there was lingering resentment towards the "chandalas" and cow eaters, i.e. Muslims (al-Kufi, 1983, p. 169). During this period, the Arab presence was mainly restricted to the region of Sind, and generally the Indus marked the farthest area controlled by Muslims.

In the interaction between Islamic civilization and Hindu culture, a notable paradox is evident in the way in which the inherent egalitarianism of the former, which affirms universal descent from a single man and woman and intrinsic biological equality, never extirpated the caste system, despite an obvious religious mandate to oppose it. However, the Muslim rulers of India were reluctant to deal with the caste system and covertly tolerated more egregious practices such as *sati* due to their sensitivity to local customs and the potential to incite rebellion if they were perceived to be challenging Hindu beliefs. Despite this, there is a spirited attempt among modern Hindu supremacists to blame Muslims for the escalation of self-immolation from the 7th century onwards (Schimmel, 1980, p.7).

The great Indologist Al-Biruni, who was fascinated by the sublime aspects of ancient Indic philosophy and Brahmanic sciences, complained that the Hindus considered Muslims to be impure for dietary and other

reasons, including wearing shoes in their homes prior to the adoption of the Indian practice of going barefoot (Al-Biruni, 1964, p. 271). At any rate, Islam's social manifestation of egalitarianism was anathema to India's ancient hierarchical stratification, which while acting as an impetus for many people to convert, also caused much adjustment in the local society and life. The Muslim presence in Sind opened the Islamic world to Indian mathematics, astronomy and medicine, and Sindis were employed by al-Ma'mun (r. 813-833) in *Bait al-Hikma* in Baghdad, and during Harun's al-Rashid's terminal illness a Sindi *vaidya* (physician), Manka al-Hindi, was sent to Baghdad to treat the Caliph. Many Indian polymaths were instrumental in Abbasid high culture and the translation of Sanskrit classics into Arabic. This reflects a discernible shift in the centre of Islamic political power to the East during the Abbasid Caliphate, reflecting the greater economic and cultural importance of Central and Southern Asia (Ibn al-Athir, 1965, p.184; Ibn Abi Usaybah, 1882, p. 33; Arshad Islam, 2011, p. 42).

The use of Central Asian and Sindi governors by the Abbasids greatly enhanced the revenues of the provinces and ensured peace (Ibn Khurdadhbih, 1967, p. 57; Jaffar, 1943, p. 126), with some sources citing an annual income of 11,500,000 *dirhams* and 150 lbs of aloes wood (Hashimi, 1927, p. 124). One notable example was the confirmation of Anbah ibn Ishaq as governor by Al-Wathiq Billah (r. 842-847); he maintained law and order, rebuilt and modified the ruined Buddhist temple of Debal as a central jail, and in 848 restored the ramparts of Debal (Al-Baladhuri, 1964, p. 437; Al-Yaqubi, 1883, p. 585).

This general peace continued until the rise of the Ghaznavids in the 11th century and their successive invasions of Northern India up to Punjab, the most famous of them being Subuktigin (r. 977-997) and his son Mahmud (Gardizi, 1928, p. 71; Nazim, 1973, pp. 164-5). Lahore became the Ghaznavid capital and a major centre of Islamic learning that attracted intellectuals from the waning centres of Central Asia (Mirza, 1962, p. i; Chand, 2011, p. 46; Schimmel, 1980, p. 8). The Ghaznavids were replaced in India in 1186 by the Ghurids (Fakhr-i-Mudabbir, 1967, pp. 253-54; Minhaj, 1954, pp. 241-42; Habibi, 1377, p. 130; Abu Zafar, 1970, pp. 285-86), who ruled Lahore, Multan and Sind (Minhaj, 1954, p. 398; Arshad Islam, 2011, p. 52).

The later period: The consolidation of the Delhi sultanate

The expansion and consolidation of the Delhi Sultanate happened during what for the purpose of this paper could be called the later reign, particularly the period of the thirteenth century onwards. The Ghurids, the Mumluks, the Tughluq and the Khalji dynasties were at the forefront of this reign.

Muizz al-Din Muhammad Ghuri (r.1202-1206), born as Shihab al-Din Ghuri, was one of the greatest rulers of the Ghurid dynasty, who laid the foundation of Muslim rule in South Asia. He captured Multan in 1175, and the following year he took Uchh and assigned the area to Ali Qirmaj. Within a short time Shihab al-Din conquered the regions of Sind and Punjab and defeated Rae of Ajmer in the famous battle of Tarain in 1192. Ajmer and the entire region of the Siwalikh territory including Hansi, Sarsuati, Samnah and other areas were incorporated into Ghuri dominion. After completing his mission, Sultan Shihab al-Din returned to Ghazni assigning the territories of Kuhram and Samnah to his vassal, Malik Qutb al-Din, who captured Meerut, Delhi and Koil in 1193. He ruled over these territories on behalf of the Sultan as his viceroy in India. After the murder of Muizz al-Din Muhammad by an Ismaili, Fidai at Damik in 1206, Qutb al-Din became Sultan of India, laying the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate. He ruled the territories of India till his death in 1210. After his death, Nasir al-Din Qubacha (r.1206-1228) retained Uchh and Multan, and became an independent ruler of Sind until overthrown by Shams al-Din Iltutmish (r. 1210-1236) (Minhaj, 1954, pp. 124, 403, 419; Muhammad Aziz, 1972, pp. 75-80,98-99).

As a frontier region, the city of Multan was vulnerable to Mongol attack from 1220 onwards, and it also received refugees migrating to India to escape the Mongol invasions of Central Asia, Persia and Afghanistan. During the Mongol occupation of Khurasan, a large number of fleeing Muslim scholars, administrators and Sufis took shelter in Sind, and many of them settled in Multan, then the gateway to India, making it a great centre of Islamic learning and culture (Minhaj, 1954, p. 419; Awfi, 1906, p. 551). In 1221, Qubacha faced the Mongol assault by Chingiz Khan (d. 1227) who penetrated deep into the region of Sind in pursuit of the Khawarizmian Sultan Jalal al-Din Minkobarni (r. 1220-1231), son of Sultan Ala al-Din Muhammad Khawarizm

Shah (r. 1200-1220), who was responsible for the initial provocation of Chingiz Khan to begin his westward campaigns. The Mongol army pressed down hard upon Jalal al-Din, who advanced toward Debal to regroup. He was intercepted while crossing the Indus, where Chingiz Khan instructed his forces to advance and capture Minkobarni alive, but Jalal al-Din evaded capture and successfully crossed the Indus in August-September 1221 (Juwayni, 1912, p. 147; Minhaj, 1954, p. 419; Najeebabadi, 2001, p. 580).

Iltutmish's accession to the throne of Delhi was a challenge to the authority of Qubacha; even though both were sons-in-law of Qutb al-Din Aibak, their relationship had never been cordial. After controlling Delhi, Iltutmish consolidated his power over the adjoining regions, and ultimately took full advantage of Qubacha's problems by occupying Lahore in 1217 and crushing his adversary in battle. In 1228 Iltutmish decided to make a final assault to oust Qubacha from Multan and Uchh and succeeded in achieving his objective (Minhaj, 1954, I, p. 445).

Under Nasir al-Din Qubacha's benevolent rule, Multan and Uchh emerged as key points of political, socio-cultural and literary activities. His court became a significant meeting place of scholars, notables, poets and eminent *ulama* from distant regions, embodying the intellectual legacy of Central Asia, Khurasan, Ghur and Ghaznin after the Mongol destruction of the classical civilization of Central Asia (Minhaj, 1954, I, p. 419; Awfi, 1906, p. 551). Notable intellectuals of this period included Sadid al-Din Muhammad Awfi, Shams al-Din Muhammad al-Khatib Balkhi, Fadili Multani and Zia al-Din Sijzi. Shams al-Din was an outstanding calligraphist of his age, whom Awfi equated with Ibn al-Bawwab and Ibn Muqlah. In 1226 the renowned historian Minhaj al-Siraj was received in the court of Qubacha and consequently appointed the *mudir* (principal) of the Madrasa-i-Firozia in Uchh, and the *qadi* of his son's army. Nasir al-Din Qubacha was a benefactor of scholars, while his Prime Minister, Ain al-Mulk Husain Ash'ari, was a patron of art and literature and his house was a centre for intellectuals. Sadid al-Din Muhammad Awfi joined Qubacha's court in 1220 as the imperial *imam* and *wa'iz* (preacher), and was consequently confirmed in the position of chief *qadi* (Minhaj, 1954, I, pp. 420, 446).

Awfi translated into Persian the well-known Arabic tome *al-Faraj ba'd al-Shiddah* of Qadi Abu al-Hasan ibn Ali Muhammad ibn Daud (d.

994) and dedicated it to Qubacha. He also composed *Lubab al-Albab*, commonly assumed to be the earliest known compilation of (*Tazkirah*) biographies of the Persian poet, and the one that laid the foundation for this genre of literature sponsored by 'Ain al-Mulk Husain al-Ash'ari. He also began the compilation of *Jawami al-Hikayat wa-Lawami al-Riwayat* on the directive of Nasir al-Din Qubacha, but it was only completed in the court of Iltutmish. Similarly, a key Arabic source, *Minhaj al-Masalik* or *Fathnamah-i-Sindh* on the history of Sind, was translated into Persian by Ali ibn Hamid ibn Abu Bakr al-Kufi in 1216 (popularly known as *Chach-Namah*), and dedicated to Ain al-Mulk Husain al-Ashari (Al-Kufi, 1983, p. 8). On the suggestion of Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya Multani, Qasim Daud *Khatib* prepared the earliest translation of '*Awarif al-Ma'rif*' into Persian, and dedicated it to Taj al-Din Abu Bakr Ayaz (Nazir Ahmad, 1972, pp. 26-29).

Qubacha's dynamic drive to encourage literary and intellectual activities could be gauged from his choice of Minhaj as the principal (*mudir*) of Madarsa-i-Firozia in Uchh and the establishment of another institution and *sarai* (inn) in Multan for Maulana Qutb al-Din Kashani, one of the most reputed intellectuals of the age. Qubacha's keen interest and patronage of scholars created a positive atmosphere in the region for the writing of significant works on the religious and literary sciences (Minhaj, 1954, I, p. 420; Farishta, 1884-85, II, p. 400; Schimmel, 1980, p. 11).

After the death of Muizz al-Din Muhammad ibn Sam, his slave Qutb al-Din Aibak (r. 1206-1210), (whom he had manumitted) ascended the throne of Delhi, and he formally laid the foundation of the Delhi Sultanate. Qutb al-Din Aibak died at Lahore while playing *chaughan* (polo), and was buried at Anarkali Bazar, Lahore (Minhaj, 1954, p. 55; Quraishi, 1977, p. 5; Hamadani, 1992, p. 45). Aram Shah succeeded him but was soon replaced by Shams al-Din Iltutmish, Aibak's son-in-law. A fight erupted between Muizz al-Din's slaves and Iltutmish but the latter with great tact and courage succeeded in establishing his authority (Aziz Ahmad, 1964, p. 6; Schimmel, 1980, p. 11). Iltutmish tactfully averted the Mongol danger to India that had arisen because of Jalal al-Din Minkobarni's advancement in Sind, while Chingiz Khan had already pursued him and crossed the Indus. Minkobarni sought help from Iltutmish who politely declined. Through his diplomatic acumen, Iltutmish successfully resolved the issue by killing two birds with one

stone. After resolving the strategic issues, he consolidated his power to secure his territorial boundaries. Within a short time, he established a powerful sultanate commanding vast areas of northern India, from Bengal to the frontier of Afghanistan, and he was the first Indian ruler to receive investiture from the Caliph of Baghdad. The period following Iltutmish's death saw an intense rivalry among the nobility and the rise of the 'Forty', a clique of dominant Turkish officers who almost became *de facto* rulers. This situation ended with the accession of Balban in 1266 (Muhammad Aziz, 1972, pp. 6, 165-67; Lal, 1980, p.1).

Balban followed the policy of consolidation rather than expansion. He was succeeded by his youthful grandson, Kayqubad (r. 1287-1290), who indulged himself in wine and venery and as a result was struck with paralysis. His infant son, Kayumars, was placed upon the throne (Barani, 2005, pp. 126, 167; Lal, 1980, pp. 1-5). The Mamluk dynasty came to an end when it was replaced by Jalal al-Din Firoz Khalji (r. 1290-1296), the founder of the Khalji dynasty. At the time of accession he was over seventy years old. Partly due to his advanced age he was mild natured and restrained himself from taking severe action against rebels (except for Sidi Maula) and he displayed great leniency to renegades such as Malik Chajju. However, he was murdered by his ungrateful nephew and son-in-law 'Ala'al-Din Muhammad Khalji, in 1296 (Barani, 2005, pp. 218-9, 176-78; Lal, 1980, pp. 6-7, 55-7, 61).

'Ala'al-Din left a great mark upon the history of India. He secured his regime and the subcontinent from the Mongol attack, and united vast areas of the region. He maintained a huge army by introducing his famous concept of market control, by which he fixed the price of all commodities, making it possible for him to recruit a huge army at low cost. He was the first among the Sultans to have taken interest in rural India and introduced reforms of far-reaching consequence in revenue system. His reign was marked by peace and prosperity, and the great expansion of the Sultanate from north to south. It also witnessed great intellectual and literary activity. 'Ala'al-Din died in 1316, but after his death his reforms fell into disuse (Barani, 2005, pp. 295-97, 369; Isami, 1948, p. 336). He was succeeded by his son Qutb al-Din Mubarak Shah (r. 1316-1320), who was unable to control the vast sultanate, and rebellions broke out in the far-flung regions. He was murdered by Khusrau Khan, a slave from Gujarat, who seized power. Khusrau gave

free reign to his Hindu tribesmen to offend and malign Islam (Barani, 2005, pp. 369, 390; Lal, 1980, pp. 271, 286, 309-12, 322).

Hearing about the murder of Qutb al-Din and the insults heaped on Islam, Ghazi Malik Tughluq marched from the Punjab and punished the usurper by killing him in battle in 1320. This victory was a prelude to the founding of the Tughluq dynasty (Amir Khusrau, 1890, p. 77; Ibn Battuta, 1953, pp. 47, 49; Barani, 2005, pp. 417-18, 440). The first concern of Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq (r. 1320-1325) was to restore law and order in the kingdom. He enhanced agriculture by planting gardens and giving incentives to cultivators (Barani, 2005, pp. 420, 440-1, 542). He was succeeded by Muhammad Shah, an energetic, highly qualified and brilliant ruler. He is said to have moved the imperial capital to Devagiri in southern India, which he named Daulatabad in 1327. Muhammad Tughluq's intention was to entrench a Muslim presence in the south to prevent frequent rebellions. Apparently Muhammad Tughluq did not transfer his capital but established a second capital. The project did not fail as is generally believed; rather it was a great success as he succeeded in planting a sizeable Muslim presence in the South so much so that the new settlers succeeded in a few years to found the Bahmani Empire (1347-1527) during his lifetime itself. However, Muhammad Tughluq's reign facing turbulence due to the great distance from the northern frontier regions and the continuous Mongol threat, compounded during the last years of his rule by famine and rebellions throughout the Sultanate (Barani, 2005, pp. 478-9, 491-3; Hardy, 1966, pp. 3-8). His cousin and successor Firoz Shah Tughluq (r. 1351-1388) brought peace and order by suppressing the rebels. The new ruler was a great builder and erected many buildings, schools and mosques, in addition to great infrastructural projects such as founding new cities and excavating canals (Afif, 1891, p. 4). Due to Firoz's flexible policy he was held responsible for the weakening of the sultanate. After his death, the Tughluq dynasty crumbled and was unable to defend itself against Timur's (r. 1370-1405) invasion, leading to its replacement by the Saiyids.

Before his departure, Timur appointed Khizr Khan, one of the former governors of Firoz Shah, as a governor to the region of Punjab and upper Sind (Barani, 2005, p. 333). Soon he gained power and extended his control over Delhi and became the founder of the Saiyid dynasty (r. 1414-1421). This dynasty was replaced by the Lodis who came to power

in 1451, when Bahlul Lodi, an Afghan chieftain, ascended the throne, supported by the Afghans (Aziz Ahmad, 1964, p. 10). Bahlul Lodi was a visionary ruler who treated the Afghan nobles with honour, dignity and (what they considered as) due respect. His successor Sikandar Lodi (r. 1489-1517) was a capable ruler who extended the boundaries of his kingdom and made Agra his capital in 1504 (Quraishi, 1977, p. 23). Due to Sikandar Lodi's encouragements and continuous support, Hindus acquired proficiency in Persian and it became a distinction for them; a Hindu poet of Persian composed verses under the pen name 'Brahmin' in the language (Farishta, 1884-85, p. 344; Badauni, 1868, I, p. 323; Lal, 1980, pp. 27; Aziz Ahmad, 1964, p. 235).

Sikandar Lodi died in 1517 and was succeeded by his son Ibrahim Lodi (r. 1517-1526). Due to his youthful age, he was at odds with senior Afghan nobles, and Daulat Khan, his own uncle, invited Babur, Mughal ruler of Kabul, to invade India. Alam Khan Lodi, a rebellious Afghan noble, and Dilawar and Haji Khan, sons of Daulat Khan, jointly launched an unsuccessful attack on Delhi (Haravi, 1986, p. 196; Babur, 2007, pp. 226-29). The uprising and turbulence encouraged Babur to wage a crucial war at Panipat, in which Ibrahim Lodi lost his life, and Babur emerged victorious and founded the famous Mughal dynasty of India in 1526 (Babur, 2007, pp. 236-7).

The intellectual and cultural impact of Islam on India

To understand the cultural and intellectual impact of Islam on India, this paper will focus on the cultural role of the Sufis and scholars, the development of art and architecture and welfare institutions such as hospitals.

Importance of Sufi orders

The evolution of traditional Sufism and the formation of the Sufi orders coincided with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Among the Sufi orders that flourished during that period, the Chishti and Suhrawardi orders are relatively more well-known on Indian soil. Both orders set up their organizations concurrently with the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate. Within a short period, Sufis belonging to these orders succeeded in establishing their sway in the entire country and built up their centres in various Indian cities by founding *jama át khanah* and *khanqah* (Sufi hospices) (Nizami, 2002, p. 187).

The Chishti silsilah

It was established by Khwaja Abu Ishaq Shami (d. 940) in Chisht, a small village near Herat, Afghanistan (Khurd, 1885, pp. 39-40; Nizami, 2002, p. 61, Rizvi, 1986, p. 114). The Chishti Silsilah was introduced in India by Khwaja Mu‘in al-Din Sijzi (d. 1236), who hailed from Sijistan. After staying sometime in Lahore, he arrived at Delhi and after a short stay there moved on to Ajmer. It is generally believed that when he settled at Ajmer, it was still ruled by the Chauhan ruler. But Shaykh Hamid al-Din Suali (d. 1273), one of the most prominent disciples of Khwaja Moinal-Din Sijzi says that the latter arrived in Delhi during the reign of Iltutmish after the conquest of Ajmer (Minhaj, 1954, p. 119; Khurd, 1885, p. 46; Isami, 1948, p. 8; Dehlavi, 1891, p. 22; Chand, 2011, p. 47; Nizami, 2002, p. 197). Under the stewardship of his dynamic heirs, Qutb al-Din Bakhtiyar Kaki, Farid Ganj-i-Shakar, Nizam al-Din Auliya and Nasir al-Din Chiragh-i-Dilli (d.1356), the Chishti Silsilah became very popular and important centres emerged at Ajmer, Narnaul, Suwal, Nagaur, Mandal, Hansi and Ajodhan and a number of towns in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Bengal, Assam, and the Deccan. Quite early in the history of Silsilah, Delhi grew into a spiritual hub of Chishtis and the masses flocked there for spiritual guidance (Nizami 2002, pp. 61, 187).

The Suhrawardi silsilah

Najib al-Din Abdul Qahir Suhrawardi (d.1168), a resident of Suhraward, was the founder of this Silsilah, but his nephew Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d.1234) consolidated the order. A number of his followers, including Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya Multani (d.1262), Hamid al-Din Nagori, Najib al-Din Buzghush, Zahar al-Din Mahmud, and Muhammad Yamini moved to India due to the Guzz and Mongol incursions. Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya Multani, one of his most prominent disciples, achieved great success in building a strong foundation of the Silsilah in Multan and Sind (Dehlavi, 1891, p. 36; Nizami, 2002, pp. 61, 236). A few of the disciples tried to establish followings in Delhi, Awadh and Bengal, but they could not make much headway due to the Chishti influence there. Indeed, the Suhrawardis failed to extend their influence in Awadh. Their main centres remained in Uchh and Multan. Since the latter was a frontier town, located on the direct caravan route from the Muslim world to Delhi, the fame of Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya Multani spread to the Turkish lands and his *khanqah* was exceptionally well

known for meeting the spiritual needs of the masses (Ibn Battuta, 1953, p. 145). Saiyid Jalal al-Din Bukhari (d. 1291) was very popular under the Tughluqs and his *khanqah* at Uchh became a centre for spiritual guidance (Kambo, 1893, p.171; Nizami, 2002, p. 236), while Shaykh Shihab al-Din's *'Awarif al-Ma'rif* enjoyed great repute in Sufi literature, becoming popular in all Sufi circles across the Muslim world, crossing the borders of the *Silsilahs* (Arshad Islam, 2001, p. 170).

Contribution to society

Since the establishment of his *Khanqah* in Multan under Qubacha's rule, Shaykh Baha al-Din Zakariya and his heirs took a keen interest in the welfare and security of the people, and there are numerous examples of their concern for the local populace (Sijzi 1894, pp. 119-20; Farishta, 1884-85, II, p, 406). They used their influence with the Sultans of Delhi to represent the interests of the people of Multan, even to the extent of effecting regime change; when Qubacha failed to satisfy the demands of the people for a fairer and more transparent socioeconomic and political system, Shaykh Zakariya used his influence to invoke the intervention of Iltutmish to re-establish Shariah (i.e. the rule of law) in Multan (Farishta, 1884-85, p.406). Similarly, when in 1246, the Mongol commander Sali Nuyin was harassing the city of Multan, the Shaykh mediated through Malik Shams al-Din with the Mongol leader, persuading the Mongols to pull out by paying them 100,000 dinars from his own resources (Harvi, 1986, pp. 157-58).

Saiyid Jalal al-Din Bukhari used to frequently visit the royal court in Delhi and he used such opportunities to present the grievances of both the residents of Multan and the inhabitants of Delhi, who sought to get their accumulated problems resolved through his good offices. The problems that he brought to the notice of Sultan were complex and diverse, and far beyond the scope of a modern government welfare system. For example, he is known to have remarked that he had not taken the trouble of travelling to Delhi to seek favour from the Sultan for himself but to secure assistance for the marriage of the daughters of one of his deceased teachers (Husain, 1983, p. 334). On every occasion Shaykh Rukn al-Din Multani visited Delhi, petitioners gathered around him and packed his *dola* (palanquin) with petitions for the Sultan's assistance through his good offices. Since the Sultan gave personal attention to such requests, it is said that the residents of Delhi used to

stand in long queues awaiting Shaykh's arrival on his way to the court and they often inundated the palanquin in a barrage of applications, being sure that they would certainly be attended to (Khurd, 1885, pp. 148-49; Kamboo, 1893, p. 142; Rizvi, 1986, p. 211).

It should be noted that in spite of the great respect in which these saints were held by the court and their desire to use this influence to serve the people, they maintained complete independence and refused to be swayed by the grandeur and awe of the court. Saiyid Jalal ud din Bukhari was an outspoken critic of the extravagant and luxurious life style of the rulers as such wealth was generally acquired by unjust means. Saiyid Jalal al-Din Bukhari delivered public sermons denouncing such expropriations and was determined in his efforts to ensure the establishment of Shariah, and it was mostly due to his influence that Sultan Firoz Shah abolished most of the taxes that could not be justified under Islamic law (i.e. those not absolutely essential for public welfare) (Husain, 1983, pp. 211-12). Saiyid Bukhari told his disciples that whatever he received from the Sultan was meant for the assistance of the people and not for the sake of the amassing of wealth (Husain, 1983, p. 262). Shaykh Rukn ud Din Multani was said to have remarked that besides learning and spirituality, money was also needed by a saint to satisfy the needs of the people (Dehlavi, 1891, p. 56).

Thus while maintaining a certain distance and aloofness from the purely political realm of the royal court and its intrigues, Sufis were always ready to intercede with the powerful on behalf of the people in their bid to help the needy and the downtrodden as a means of social service. The core of their spirituality was service for others, devoting their time, energy and money to the Islamic cause of helping the oppressed, and affirming the absolute superiority of non-violent methods to solve social and other problems of society (Khurd, 1885, pp. 46, 185; Nizami, 2002, pp. 236, 238).

The Muslim community of India was, by the 13th century, a dynamic Islamic civilization in its own right, interacting with the Hindu masses, which brought mutual understanding and fruitful awareness to both communities. While carefully avoiding antithetical engagement on sensitive issues, Islam had an enormous impact on the social and cultural life of Hindus. Both communities influenced each

other in their daily practices and culture, and many Muslim elements were incorporated into Hindu religion, art, literature and science and vice-versa, due in large part to the close assimilation of Sufi practices, which themselves exhibit numerous Hindu and Buddhist themes not derived from exoteric Islam (Chand, 2011, p. 137). Muslims borrowed much ancient Indian knowledge of mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine and philosophy, while lifestyle traces were left by Muslims on Indian customs, culture, music, fashion and dress, food, cooking, marriage, celebration of festivals and fairs (Chand, 2011, pp. 138-42).

Muslim art and architecture

The land of Sind was opened to Islam in the beginning of 8th century, which is why Sind was known as the gateway of Islam (*Bab al-Islam*) in India. In the first phase of their arrival, the Muslims erected a number of administrative and religious buildings. The second phase started after the Ghaznavid conquest of Punjab and in the first half of the 12th century. The administrative headquarters was established at Lahore and a number of administrative buildings were founded but these were extirpated by the Ghurids (Percy, 1975, p. 97).

The civilizational impact of Islam in India can be seen materially in a number of extant cities, mosques, tombs, palaces, forts, and other artistic buildings built over the centuries by Muslim rulers in different parts of India. Although a number of architectural buildings were erected during the Umayyad and Abbasid periods, these vestiges are now extinct except the magnificent building of the Dome of Rock in Al-Quds that was built by the Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik as well as the great Umayyad mosque of Damascus. Under the Ghaznavids and Ghurids, several buildings were founded in Lahore and Multan for various official purposes, but the end of the 13th century marked the real launching of Islamic architecture in India when Qutb al-Din Aibak established the capital of the sultanate at Delhi (Percy, 1975, p. 32).

The early years of the Delhi Sultanate witnessed the erection of a number of buildings by the Sultans and the nobles, for example, Qutb al-Din Aibak founded two famous mosques, both of which still exist: the Qutb Mosque, also known as *Quwwatul-Islam* ('*Might of Islam*'), with its magnificent *mihrab* (prayer niche), was begun in Delhi in 1195 and completed in 1197; and the other, in Ajmer, known as the *Arhai-din-ka jhopra* ('*hut of two-and-a-half-days*') began in 1200 (Syed

Ahmad, 1904, p. 13; Percy, 1975, pp. 12, 14). In 1199, an arched screen was erected in the direction of the *qibla* in the Qutb Mosque, and it was further extended in both directions - north and south - by Sultan Iltutmish in 1229 (Syed Ahmad, 1904, pp. 14-15). It was totally an original piece of work considered as a perfect Islamic structural design erected on Indian soil. Qutb al-Din Aibak constructed the present Qutb Minar, a beautiful and exceptionally tall minaret, as a part of Qutb Mosque. These constructions were begun by Qutb al-Din Aibak in 1195 and finally completed by Sultan Iltutmish in 1229 along the same architectural style and pattern, which laid the foundations of Islamic architecture in India (Syed Ahmad, 1904, pp. 16-18; Percy, 1975, pp. 11, 13).

Near the Qutb Minar are other famous buildings like the tombs of Iltutmish and his son Nasir al-Din Muhammad (Sultan Ghari, 1229), and an artistic gate known as Alai Darwazah built in 1310, which was undertaken as part of a larger building plan of Ala al-Din Khalji. The red sandstone gateway was erected to serve as one of the four accesses to the mosque, two of which were the eastern side, with another one each on the north and south. The southern entrance is the only finished gate to the Quwwatul-Islam mosque. It is the first structure of its kind using Islamic principles of building and geometric patterns. The early Indo-Islamic models of Delhi demonstrate a different phase of development from the foundation of mosques and tombs by the first governor of Delhi, Qutb al-Din Aibak, followed by his son-in-law Shams al-Din Iltutmish, both of whom were the founders of buildings in the Islamic style (Syed Ahmad, 1904, pp. 20-24; Percy, 1975, pp. 11, 13, 16-8).

During the Delhi Sultanate, the nobles also evinced great interest in constructing magnificent buildings, including schools and ministries, but the most sublime projects were for prayers. Malik Taj al-Din Sanjar i-Gazlak Khan, a Shamsi governor of Uchh constructed Jami mosques at a number of places (Minhaj, 1954, p. 256). Under the Mamluks, epigraphic evidence testifies the construction of a Jami mosque at Hansi by Taj al-Din Mir Miran Salari. Ikhtiyar al-Din Firoz Aetigin, a governor of Lakhnauti under Ghiyas al-Din Balban (r.1266-1287) constructed a Jami mosque at Monghyr district in Bihar (as stated in the inscription dated 1267) (Ahmad, 1973, pp. 11-3).

Kilugarhi was the name of a village on the banks of the Jamuna River. After the death of Sultan Balban, his grandson Kayqubad, son of the Bughra Khan ascended the throne with the name of Sultan Muiz al-Din Kayqubad in 1287. He ordered the construction of a magnificent palace and laid the foundation of a township with a beautiful garden at Kilugarhi. He ordered all nobles, ministers and elites to build their abodes nearby and it soon became a populous place for residence. Malik Majd al-Mulk, the father of Zia al-Din Barani, also constructed a magnificent house there (Barani, 2005, p. 209). After the death of Kayqubad, Sultan Jalal al-Din Firoz Khalji completed the unfinished palace of Kayqubad and made it his residence. He ordered his ministers to build their houses there as well. The palace was elaborately decorated and the coronation ceremony was held there (Syed Ahmad, 1904, p. 16).

Under the Tughluqs (1320-1414), the same enthusiasm continued among both the Sultans and nobles. Literary and epigraphic evidence indicates the keen interest of nobles in the construction of different monuments. Under Ghiyas al Din Tughluq, Malikzadah Ahmad ibn Ayaz was *Shahna-i-imarat*, the superintendent of buildings, and under Muhammad Tughluq, Malikzadah was promoted to the post of Prime Minister with the title of Khwaja-i Jahan (Barani, 2005, pp. 424, 454, 527; Isami, 1948, pp. 386,412-13,420; Ibn Battuta, 1953, pp. 654-55; Badauni, 1868, pp. 227,237, Farooqui, 2011, p.80). The superintendent supervised the technical work of the building department like masonry, carpentry, blacksmith and stone cutting and dressing. The finance department (*Diwan-i-wazarat*) examined the buildings' plans and after a careful scrutiny, they sanctioned adequate funds to architects (Afif, 1891, p. 331; Nath, 1978, p. 60). Malik Zahirul-Juyush, a famous architect who supervised the Khurramabad palace, initiated a plan of four-*iwan* for Sultan's Jami Mosque (Barani, 2005, p. 454).

Under the Tughluqs, a number of cities were founded, e.g. Tughluqabad (1321), Jahanpanah (1327) and Firozabad (1354), reflecting considerably sophisticated town planning techniques. Some of the outstanding buildings constructed during the period include the tomb of Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq (r. 1320-1325), the Kalan mosque (1387) and the Lal Darwazah Masjid Jaunpur (1388). Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq took personal interest in repairing and restoring the old monuments and mosques. Firoz Shah built a new capital city known as Firoz Shah Kotla (1354) on the banks of the Yamuna (Jamuna). He also founded

the fortified cities of Jaunpur, Fathabad and Hisar. These are only some examples from among numerous magnificent works of architectural art from this period (Syed Ahmad, 1904, pp. 24, 41-42; Percy, 1975, pp. 20, 22, 24, 144; Azizuddin, 2008, p. 6).

Firoz Shah is well known among the Tughluqs for his construction activities. He built Masjid-i-Jami Firozi in Delhi in 1354. Its dome contained an inscription (an elaborate description of deeds and achievements of the Sultan), which was later published as *Futuhāt-i-Firoz Shahi*. He constructed the Kalan or Kali Masjid in 1370 (Storey, 1972, p. 151; Percy, 1975, pp. 22-3). Other constructions include the Begampuri Mosque, Kalu Sarai Mosque (built around 1387), and the Khirki Mosque (Afif, 1891, p. 101; Beg, 1982, pp. 24, 84; Syed Ahmad, 1904, pp. 29, 37-40).

Among the religious buildings constructed by Firoz Shah, Madrasa Hauz Khas in Delhi is well-known. It was a magnificent three-storey large complex that housed a large number of students. There were residential quarters in the vicinity of the madrasa and a masjid inside the campus. Firoz Shah also built the *dargah* (mausoleum) of Nasir al-Din Chiragh-i-Dilli in 1370 along with a mosque. Among his constructions is included a *bund* (barrage) in Delhi (Percy, 1975, p. 24). Firoz Shah was extremely excited on the occasion of receiving the Qadam Sharif (the footprint of the Prophet Muhammad) brought by Jahanian Jahan Gasht (d. 1384), which he fixed on the tomb of Prince Fath Khan. A mosque, madrasa and a *hauz* (cistern) were built there in 1374. The *dargah* of Saiyid Mahmud Bahar, a descendant of Saiyid Nasir al-Din of Sonipat, was also constructed by Firoz Shah (Afif, 1891, p. 100; Beg, 1982, pp. 88, 92-3; Syed Ahmad, 1904, pp. 27, 37).

Firoz Shah constructed a Chillagah (place of meditation) for the Sufis known as Pir Ghaib ('hidden saint'). Next to it, the Kaushik-i-Jahan-Numa was built by the Sultan as a hunting ground. Hunting lodges (*shikargah*) and resting places such as Kushak-i-Firozi were constructed. He is said to have built some 120 *khanqahs* (hospices) in Delhi for the poor. A person was allowed to stay up to three days in each on a rotation basis (to discourage professional scrounging), but the indigent could stay in these facilities throughout the year at royal expense.

During the reign of Firoz Shah, most buildings were constructed from cheap, locally available materials with local techniques, requiring little specialist workmanship. However, these monuments suffered extensive damage over time, and the remains of the former corridors of power in the Delhi Sultanate are now decaying and dilapidated (Syed Ahmad, 1904, pp. 25, 34-36; Azizuddin, 2008, p. 10).

Hospitals under Tughluqs

The Tughluqs established hospitals and promoted Unani medicine in India. Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq, the founder of the Tughluq dynasty, displayed great interest in medicine and personally bandaged the wounds of injured soldiers of Khusrau Khan during the conquest of Delhi in 1320 (Khusrau, 1933, p. 102; Wasty, 1974, p. 17; Azmi, 1992, p. 52). For the welfare of the public, Muhammad Tughluq established seventy hospitals in Delhi alone and employed 1,200 physicians. The Sultan himself was a Tabib (physician), and he took keen interest in the profession. This policy was continued by Firoz Shah with the same spirit and vigour, adding five more hospitals to house expert physicians. Rich and poor patients were treated free of charge and also served food as a spiritual honour for the Sultan (Barani, 2005, pp. 463-4; Agha, 1996, pp. 127-8).

Contribution of scholars and their literary productions

It is important to note that the elite of the Delhi Sultanate were not only preoccupied with political and administrative affairs, they were equally devoted to patronizing men and women of letters in their pursuits of academic and literary contribution, thereby facilitating vibrant development in literature, sciences and various crafts. As the nobles themselves were well-versed in diverse branches of sciences, they produced a variety of literature in numerous languages, mainly Persian, Arabic, Awadhi and Hindawi. Their literary production can be grouped into literary works composed by the nobles themselves, and those whom they patronized.

Works by aristocrats

Majd al-Mulk Baha al-Din al-Jamji was a prominent noble and a well-known Qutbi Amir. He was a poet of great merit and used to compose fine poetry (Awfi, 1906, pp. 467-8). Rukn al-Din Samarqandi (d.1218), who was appointed Qazi of Lakhnauti by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji

(d. 1206), learned Sanskrit in Bengal from a local *yogi* (Hindu ascetic) and subsequently rendered *Amritkund*, a Sanskrit work on *yoga* entitled *Hauz al-Hayat* into Persian, assisted by Bhoj, a local Brahman. He further rendered this book into Arabic entitled *Mirat al-Ma'ani fi Idrak-i-Alam-i-Insani*. This was a pioneering effort in opening the traditionally hidden and sacerdotal knowledge and traditions of India to the outside world. Muhammad Ghaus Shattari Gwaliori (d. 1562) rendered it again into Persian entitled *Bahr al-Hayat* (Rashid, 1969, pp. 46-52; Hadi, 1995, pp. 519-20).

Malik Taj al-Din Reza, a *dabir* (secretary) of Iltutmish, was a Persian poet of repute born in India. Due to his excellent poetry, he received appreciation from the elite of Delhi (Sijzi 68; Qamaruddin 72). Taj Reza recited an admirable *qasida* celebrating the occasion of receiving the robe of honour for Iltutmish sent by the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustansir (r.1226-1242) (Qawwas, 1999, p. 297; Hadi, 1995, p. 517). On the occasion of the conquest of the Gwalior fort by Iltutmish, Reza composed verses which were later inscribed on the fort's gate. Similarly, he composed *qasaid* praising Rukn al-Din Firoz and his *wazir* Malik Nizam al-Mulk Junaidi (Qawwas, 1999, pp. 54-5; Badauni, 1868, I, pp. 67, 69; Nizam al-Din, 1927, p. 29; Farishta, 1884-85, p. 66). He was also known to have composed a couplet on the occasion of Shams Dabir's appointment as the *mustaufi-i-mamalik* (Auditor General of the Sultanate) during the reign of Nasir al-Din Mahmud (Sijzi, 1894, pp. 68, 127-8).

Shams al-Din Dabir was a resident of Samana, and besides his secretarial accomplishments he was also an eminent poet. He was devoted to Farid al-Din Mas'ud Ganj-i-Shakar (1175-1265), the famous Chishti Saint. Due to his eloquent poetry he was given the title *Malik-al-Kalam* ('Lord of Eloquence') by Nasir al-Din. Shams al-Din Dabir was a good friend of Amir Khusrau; the latter cited him in his writings and composed a *qasida* in his praise (Sijzi, 1894, pp. 68, 127-8).

Minhaj al-Din 'Umar ibn Siraj al-Din Muhammad al-Juzjani, the celebrated author of *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* as well as a poet of great eminence, was appointed as the *mudir* (principal) of Madarsa-i-Firozia in Uchh by the then ruler Nasir al-Din Qubach in 1227 (Minhaj, 1954, pp. 175, 188, 200, 296, 303; Barani, 2005, p.14; Farishta, 1884-85, p.71). After Qubacha's death, Minhaj came to Delhi in 1228 and received the

patronage of Shams al-Din Iltutmish, who appointed him *qazi*, *khatib* (preacher), *muhtasib* (superintendent of morals) and *imam* of Gwalior. He was in fact made responsible for all religious affairs and was later assigned the office of *Sadr-i-Jahan* (Chief Ecclesiastic of the State). He was appointed as the *qazi* of Delhi and made *qazi-i-Mamalik* by Bahram Shah in 1241, but after Bahram Shah's death, Minhaj resigned and moved to Bengal. He returned to Delhi and was appointed as the *mudir* (principal) of the Nasiriya College at Delhi, and superintendent of its *awqaf* (endowments) in 1244. *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri*, an eyewitness account of the reign of Iltutmish and his successors, makes particular note of the foundation of Muslim rule in Bengal from its conquest by Muhammad Bakhtiyar Khalji until 1259 (Minhaj, 1954, pp. 144, 191, 202-205, 211; Sijzi, 1894, pp. 53, 265). Amid Loyaki, an Afghan of the Loyak clan, was a scholar of repute who earned fame for his skill of composing *qasida*. Balban conferred upon him the title *Fakhr al-Mulk*. Amid later joined the court of Balban's son, Muhammad at Multan (Badauni, 1868, pp. 96-99).

Amir Khusrau belonged to a family of eminent nobles. His father was an Amir and his maternal grandfather Imadul Mulk was the *Rawat Arz* (Minister of War) of Sultan Balban. Amir Saifuddin Mahmud, the father of Amir Khusrau lived at Patiyali in Etah, Uttar Pradesh, where Amir Khusrau was born in 1253. From an early age he began to compose verses and *ghazals* that drew attention and admiration from the elders. He was initially under the patronage of Malik Chajju, a nephew of Balban, after which he came to Bughra Khan, the Governor of Bengal; soon after he joined the court of Prince Muhammad, the eldest son of Balban at Multan. Amir Khusrau enjoyed extraordinary mastery over all forms of poetry. After the death of Prince Muhammad, he composed moving elegies under the title *Hukm-al-Hikam*, a section of his *diwan*, *Wast-al-Hayat* (Middle of Life), in which he depicted the tragedy at Multan and the awful death of the Prince (Barani, 2005, p. 129; Badauni, 1868, I, p. 13; Bakhshi, 1927, p. 98; Habib, 2005, p. 18; Mirza 1962, pp. 29, 155-57).

Khusrau is one of the few Indian poets whose poetic accomplishments have been conceded by the Iranians. He was a prolific writer of both prose and poetry and in both genres he has left a vast corpus, but his genius flowed more naturally in poetry. In prose, his *Ijaza-i-Khusravi* (5 volumes) and *Khazain al-Futuh* are very well-known. In poetry, besides

historical *mathnavis*, he has left behind several collections of his poems. He successfully served seven Sultans and was counted among the very close disciples of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Auliya (d. 1325). He died on 18 Shawwal 725/26 September 1225 and was buried next to the grave of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Auliya (Mirza, 1962, pp. 136-37). A contemporary of Amir Khusrau was Amir Hasan Sijzi (d. 1336), the famous author of *Fawa'id al-Fuad*, i.e. the collection of *malfuzat* (sayings) of Shaykh Nizam al-Din Auliya. It is not only an anthology of Sufi discourses over a fifteen-year period, but rather it is an inclusive, authentic and fascinating testimony of the socio-cultural and religious life of the period. From a literary point of view, his *ghazals* are considered to be of a very high standard of extraordinary beauty.

Zia al-Din Barani (d.1357) was a historian, jurist and political thinker and the author of *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* and *Fatwa-i-Jahandari*. *Tarikh-i-Firoz Shahi* is a valuable source of the Delhi Sultanate from the reign of Sultan Balban to that of the first six years of Firoz Shah's reign, while *Fatawa-i-Jahandari* is a book on political philosophy and statecraft that deals with the counsel to rulers for good governance. He is the first historian known to have recorded the socio-economic conditions of the time, particularly with regard to the Delhi Sultanate.

Maulana Zia al-Din Sunami, a reputed scholar of religious sciences, was an authority on *tafsir* and *fiqh*. He was a *muhtasib* (Supervisor of Public Morals) during the reigns of Ala al-Din Khalji and Muhammad Tughluq. Maulana Zia al-Din wrote a treatise in Arabic entitled *Nisab al-Ihtisab*, as a manual for *muhtasibs*. In this book, he explained the definition, significance and objectives of *hisbah* and discussed in detail the duties of *muhtasib*. It served as a reference book for a number of judicial works including *Fatawa-i-Firozshahi* and *Fatawa-i-Hammadiyah* compiled during the 16th century (Barani, 2005, p. 356; Zafarul Islam, 2005, pp. 8-9). Maulana Razi al-Din Hasan al-Saghani (d. 1252), a native of Badaun, started his career as *naib-i-mushrif* (deputy account officer) in Koil (Aligarh). He rose to be a great scholar and later compiled *Mashariq-al-Anwar*. It was the most popular *hadith* collection throughout the medieval period and constituted an integral part of the syllabus (Sijzi, 1894, pp. 103-05; Nizami, 2002, pp. 163-4).

Qazi Kamal al-Din Jafri, a *qazi* of Badaun, was known for his piety and scholarship. He compiled a book on *fiqh* entitled *Munfiq* (Sijzi, 1894,

pp. 225, 236-7; Qalandar, 1959, p. 211). Thakkura Pheru, a Jain scholar and a mint officer of Ala al-Din Khalji, wrote on a variety of scientific subjects in Prakrit. His well-known works are *Kharataragaccha-yugapradhana-catuhpadhika*, *Jyotisara*, *Dravyaparikkha*, *Vastusara*, *Rayanaparikkha*, *Dhatupatti* and *Ganitasarakaumudi* (Bhandarkar, 1907, p. 38).

Kabir al-Din, son of Taj al-Din Iraqi, was a court historian of Ala al-Din Khalji, and an expert in *dabiri* (secretarial) skills and the art of *insha*. He was appointed as *Amir-i-Dad-i Lashkar* and composed *Fathnama* ('Letters of Victory'), which ran into several volumes. He also composed *Tarikh-i-Alai*, which appraised the career and achievements of Ala al-Din Khalji (Barani, 2005, pp. 14, 361; Lal, 1980, p. 341). Ahmad Hasan Abdusi, known as Taj al-Mulk, was a noble of Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq who joined Sultan's Lakhnauti expedition in 1324, and authored *Basatin al-Uns* and *Sadr-i-'Ala*. The *Basatin al-Uns*, a Hindu tale written in a style of metaphorical Persian, was completed in 1325. Muhammad Tughluq promoted him as *Dabir-i-Khas* by assigning him the title, Taj al-Mulk (Rashid, 1969, p. 171; Jackson, 1999, p. 153). The most prominent literary figure during the Tughluq period was Malik Ain al-Mulk, commonly known as Ain al-Mulk Mahru, who compiled a number of works on different sciences including *Tarassul-i-Ain al-Mulki*, commonly known as *Insha-i-Mahru*. It was a collection of letters which testifies to his literary skill and is regarded as a model of the *Insha* literature. It is also a very important source of historical information regarding the period. Tatar Khan, an adopted son of Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq, and the governor of Zafarabad, was a poet who used to compose verses to appease the temper of Muhammad Tughluq (Barani, 2005, 424, 454; Afif, 1891, pp. 409-10, 488; Zilli, 2000, p. 326).

Malik Shams al-Din Abu Riya, alias Ziya al-Mulk, the *mustaufi-i-mamalik*, was an intelligent and accomplished *qasida* writer under Firoz Shah (Afif, 1891, p. 456). Ibn Battuta came to India in 1333 and became the *Qazi* of Delhi. He wrote a long poem in praise of Muhammad Tughluq and his travelogue *Tuhfat al-Nuzzar fi Gharaib al-Amsar wa Ajaib al-Asfar*, popularly known as *Rehla*, was a valuable work for the fourteenth century Muslim world (Ibn Battuta, 1953, p. 750; Selin, 1997, p. 417). Malik Qabul Qara Khan, a jurist under Firoz Shah Tughluq, compiled a legal digest entitled *Fatawa-i-Qara Khani* for the guidance of *Qazis* (Hadi, 1995, p. 482). Aziz al-Din ibn Abdullah (Mutahhar

of Kara) came from Iran and was appointed as *qazi* of Kara (near Allahabad) by Firoz Shah. He is known for his *qasidas* praising Firoz Shah and his successor Nasir al-Din Mahmud Shah. He paid tribute to Ain al-Mulk and his sons, Malik Husam al-Din and Karim al-Din, by composing a number of *qasidas*.

Amir Ikhtiyar al-Din was a noble at the court of Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq. He composed *qasidas* in praise of a new palace built by the Sultan (Chandra, 2003, p. 363). Qazi Zahir Dihlavi was a brilliant poet under Nasir al-Din Mahmud Shah Tughluq. His *Diwan* (anthology) is full of *qasidas* in tribute to Mahmud (Badauni, 1868, p. 257). Yahya ibn Ahmad Sirhindi, a courtier of Saiyid ruler Mubarak Shah, wrote *Tarikh-i-Mubarakshahi* as a token of gratitude to the Sultan (Hadi, 1995, pp. 623-4). Masnad-i-‘Ali Mian Bhu’a, the *wazir* and *sadr* of Sikandar Lodi, had particular interest in the field of *ilm-i-tibb* (medicine), and compiled the *Tibb-i-Sikandar Shahi*. Mian Bhu’a, after gaining mastery over Sanskrit, studied the *Ayurvedic* system of medicine which he combined with *Tibb-i-Unani* to produce *Ma’adan al-Shifa-i Sikandar Shahi*, using different Sanskrit classics like *Ja Deskarat*, *Ras Ratnako*, *Suangdhar* and *Chintama* as his source materials (Mushtaqi, 2002, pp. 79-80; Rashid, 1969, pp. 171-2).

Works patronized by aristocrats

Under the Delhi Sultanate, nobles enjoyed great influence. Being a leisure class of conspicuous consumers and artistic connoisseurs, they generously used this influence for patronizing poets, intellectuals and craftsmen. This practice of extending patronage to the litterateur and scholars was initiated by the Mamluk nobles and continued till the end of the Delhi Sultanate (Askari, 1957, p. 19; Shahnawaz, 2014, p. 134). Muaiyid-i-Jajarmi Abul Ma’ali, attached to the Shamsi court, translated *Ihya-u-Ulum al-Din* into Persian in 1250 on the instruction of Nizam al-Mulk Junaidi, the *wazir* of Iltutmish. Junaidi patronized a number of scholars and poets like Sadid-al-Din Muhammad Awfi, who composed *Lubab-al-Albab* and *Jawami-al-Hikayat wa Lawami ar-riwayat* and dedicated them to Junaidi. Amir Ruhani, Taj al-Din Bukhari and Siraji Khurasani, eminent poets, also composed interesting *qasidas* exhibiting love for their patron Junaidi (Hadi, 1995, p. 360; Siddiqui, 2003, p. 83).

Malik Qutb al-Din Hasan Ghuri (d.1254), the *naib-i-mulk* under Ala al-Din Mas’ud, patronized Shams Moin, a prominent poet and prose

writer who wrote on the life and achievements of his patron (Minhaj, 1954, pp. 196-98; Nizami, 2002, p.148). Kamal Karim Nagauri, the compiler of *Majmu-i-Khani*, a Persian work on *fiqh*, dedicated it to Ulugh Qutlagh-i-Azam Muazzam Bahram Khan (d.1388). He was a tutor of Muhammad Tughluq and was held in great respect by the Sultan (Barani, 2005, p. 113; Khusrau, 1890, pp. 68-9). Malik Tatar Khan, an eminent noble under Firoz Shah Tughluq, was well known for his sponsorship of two major Islamic works, *Tafsir-i-Tatar Khani* and *Fatawa-i-Tatarkhani*, written around 1375. The two pieces of work required a panel of leading *Ulama* headed by Maulana Alim al-Andapati (Dehlavi). The importance of the *Fatawa* is due to its extensive range, which includes contemporary social and religious issues like prayers, fosterage, divorce, maintenance and manumission of slaves, oaths, international relations, penalties, apostasy, abandonment of slaves, missing persons, partnership and endowment, as well as relations with non-Muslims (Afif, 1891, p. 392; Nadvi, 1932, p. 96).

Maulana Daud of Dalmau wrote his famous Hindi *masnavi Chandayan* in early Awadhi script, dedicated to Khan-i-Jahan Juna Shah during the reign of Firoz Shah in 1373. Malik Shams al-Din Ibrahim Hasan Abu Raja, the governor of Gujarat, patronized scholars who wrote an anonymous Persian work on music, *Ghuniyat al-Munya* ('Pleasure of Desire'), the earliest known Persian work on Indian music, composed in Gujarat in 1375. It was written at the request of the Governor of Gujarat, Malik Shams al-Din Ibrahim Hasan Abu Raja. The author utilized many classical Indian books on music like *Bharata*, *Sangit-Ratnakara*, *Sangit-Ratnavali*, *Sangit-Binod*, *Sangit-Mudra*, *Satanak* and *Raga Avarna* (Hadi, 1995, p. 207).

Mian Bhu'a, a great intellectual and *wazir* of Sikandar Lodi, sponsored the translation of significant Sanskrit works into Persian. Mian Bhu'a encouraged Umar ibn Yahya al-Kabuli to compile a voluminous work on classical Indian Music entitled *Lahjat-i-Sikandar Shahi*. He consulted the Indian classical works like *Sangit-Ratnakar*, *Sangit Sangarah*, *Ud Bharat*, *Sudha Nidhi*, *Sangit Samassaya*, *Sangit Kalpataro* and *Sangit Matanga*. Asim Shu'aib Abdusi compiled a dictionary, *Mu'jam al-Ajam*, under the patronage of Dawud Khan, an Afghan noble of Sikandar Lodi, in 1493 (Al-Kabuli, 1999, pp. 14-5; Nazir Ahmad, 1972, p. 410; Hadi, 1995, p. 95).

Conclusion

The success of the amazing scientific temperament and broad-mindedness of Indo-Muslim rulers and people of the Delhi Sultanate established the predominance of 'Indo-Islamic Civilization' in the Islamic East in all fields of knowledge. Islamic elites in the Sultanate provided a broadly tolerant umbrella under which the intercontinental exchange of information and ideas was facilitated and made accessible to the wider world. The salient feature of the Delhi Sultans was their outward looking attitude, pursuing a more vigorous and creative foreign policy than the Mughals. Three Sultans of Delhi received official investiture, both from Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad and Cairo. Iltutmish was the first to establish diplomatic relations with the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mustansir Billah (r.1226-1242) and received a patent of investiture by the Caliph's messenger who confirmed him the title *Yamin Khalifat Allah* and *Nasir Amir al-Mu'minin* in 1229.

A hundred years later, Sultan Muhammad Tughluq also received Haji Said Sarsari, an emissary of the Abbasid Caliph of Egypt Al-Hakim II (r. 1341-1352) to Delhi, in 1344. Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq twice received mandates from the Egyptian Caliph Al-Mu'tadid Billah (r. 1352-1362) as *Sayfal-Khilafat* (Sword of the Khilafat), and *Qasim Amir al-Mu'minin* (Partner of the Commander of Faithful) in 1354. In 1362, he received another patent from the new Abbasid Caliph Al-Mutawakkil Billah I (r. 1362-1383) with the title *Sayyid al-Salatin* (Lord of Sultans) (Afif, 1891, pp. 274-76; Jackson, 1999, p. 296).

Islamic civilization under the Delhi Sultanate paved the way for the local populace to experience Islamic religion, which liberated many people from the rigid restrictions of the traditional caste system and introduced refinements in cuisine, apparel, town planning and the arts. India also proved to be a fertile ground for Persian language and Islamic learning, and indigenous scholars as well as émigrés produced many fundamental and key works in various fields, particularly their fostering and development of Sufism and Hanafi *fiqh*.

The factor facilitating the remarkable civilizational fillip given to India and the world under the Delhi Sultanate was the robe of Islamic civilization that justified the rule and power of the Sultans and aristocracy, and which conferred legitimacy on them by virtue of their lavish patronage of material welfare and propagation of knowledge of

all kinds for the advancement, preservation, harmony and adornment of society. Although there is much blood in the history of all world civilizations, rarely do we find such a legacy of educational, artistic and civilizational excellence as that of the Islamic world and medieval India. Just as the world should acknowledge the debt it owes to India, India must also acknowledge the debt it owes to Islam and to the generations of Muslims who fostered learning and progress through striving to live up to the words of the Prophet Muhammad, who said (narrated on the authority of Zayd ibn Thabit):

May Allah brighten the face of the person who hears what I say and retains it, then conveys it to others: for sometimes one who hears from another remembers it better than the original hearer himself (Musnad Ahmad and Sunan at-Tirmidhi).

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